

# CAREERS FOR GRADUATES IN HISTORY

The purpose of this chart is to show the variety of career opportunities available to historians. Areas of employment are extensive. Space has limited references to typical organizations historians should consider for employment. "Duties" focus on those responsibilities cited in employment advertisements for which historians are suited by the education. These are not complete job descriptions, and qualifications for education and experience vary widely.  
Contact your Department of History and the sponsors of this chart for further information.

**START HERE**

Do you wish to continue your education beyond a B.A.?

Do you wish to teach or make a career of education? (Note that a graduate degree may be required.)

Do you wish to pursue a career in a:

Private Sector Corporation?

Public Agency?

Private Individual or Small Firm?

Private Nonprofit Organization?

## Private Sector Corporations

**BANKING**  
INCLUDES credit creating institutions which lend, borrow, issue, or safeguard money. Commercial banks, savings institutions, development and reserve banks are examples.

DUTIES: Produce historical financial, economic, and political risk analyses; manage current and archival records; research operating and policy issues; write and teach staff corporate history; mount historical displays.

**COMMUNICATIONS MEDIA**  
INCLUDES network and cable television companies, TV stations, motion picture films, and record and tape companies.

DUTIES: Research and write historical documentaries and narratives; analyze public trends over time; provide information and archival services.

**INFORMATION MANAGEMENT**  
INCLUDES a wide array of firms that need to store and access information about their products, services, customers, etcetera

DUTIES: develop and / or maintain systems of information storage and retrieval, especially digital; verify, edit, and publish documents, oversee public information and undertake document research; make information accessible and usable by internal or external audiences.

**INSURANCE**  
INCLUDES firms engaged in underwriting risks and losses, range from life, health, and casualty insurance companies, to concerns offering credit, fire, title, and product liability insurance.

DUTIES: Search and write historical records relating to insurance case histories; prepare studies of policy matters based on historical research; provide legislative analysis; manage archives and records centers.

**INVESTMENT SERVICES**  
INCLUDES companies specializing in issuing, purchasing, and selling of corporate equity. Examples are brokerage and venture capital firms; investment banking houses.

DUTIES: Research in company financial and management history; information and records management; analysis of current market and economic trends; analysis of opportunities for business.

**LAW**  
INCLUDES law or legal service firms.

DUTIES: Research in public and private archives and records sources; development of support material from historical evidence; oral history for depositions; writing briefs.

**MANUFACTURING**  
INCLUDES industries engaged in the manufacture of consumer capital goods.

DUTIES: Analysis of markets, financial, economic, and political risk over time; corporate history; design of decision support systems; management of archival and record-keeping services; staff training in corporate history and foreign cultures; oral history for organizational diagnosis; development of exhibits of archival material and memorabilia.

**MARKETING AND ADVERTISING**  
INCLUDES firms which, using marketing and advertising techniques, promote the flow of goods from the producer.

DUTIES: Research market performance; determine trends on which to base future estimates; analyze historical marketing and advertising strategies; write historical analysis of markets and pricing effect.

**MINERAL EXTRACTION INDUSTRIES**  
INCLUDES firms engaged in exploration for drilling, storage, and distribution of petroleum-based and natural gas products as well as other minerals.

DUTIES: Analysis of political risks and of key political figures with reference to economic implications for business; geographical and land use history; research in mineral claims; management; information retrieval services.

**PUBLIC RELATIONS**  
INCLUDES firms active in promoting public relations and public affairs for clients in all economic sectors.

DUTIES: Analysis of public trends; presentation of clients' activities based on historical interpretation; archival and information management; writing historical material for organizational promotion.

**PUBLISHING AND JOURNALISM**  
INCLUDES firms that publish books, news, trade, professional journals; historical, popular, or other subjects, in print or digitally.

DUTIES: Copy editing; substance editing; manuscript evaluation; research on market demands; interview using oral history techniques; write for general public under time constraints; place current events in historical perspective.

**UTILITIES**  
INCLUDES electric companies; natural, liquefied, and synthetic gas companies; water and sewerage firms; communications companies such as telephone and data transmission.

DUTIES: Historical analysis of rate structures; archival services; direct record retentions and microfilming programs; provide information services; research policy and management studies; review local issues and problems.

**OTHER INDUSTRIES**  
NUMEROUS opportunities exist for historians in other industries where history or historians' skills are required. Individuals are encouraged to apply research techniques such as those learned in class to seek out those positions. They should then present their historical skill and their knowledge in terms applicable to the industry in questions. An entrepreneurial spirit is required.

## Graduate History & Related Education

**ACADEMIC HISTORY PROGRAMS**  
OFFER M.A., D.A., AND Ph.D. level instruction in a wide variety of chronological, topical, and geographical fields. Provide students with skills usable in many careers.

**PUBLIC AND APPLIED HISTORY PROGRAMS**  
OFFER M.A., D.A., AND Ph.D. level instruction in diverse areas of public history. Provide students with skills and subject matter specifically designed to prepare them for careers in industry, government and nonprofit organizations. Options include:

- Archives, Manuscripts, and Records Management
- Business and Corporate History
- Community History
- Cultural Resource Management
- Editing
- Genealogy and Family History
- Historic Preservation
- Historic Site Archeology
- Historical Administration
- History and Law
- Industrial and Technological History
- Library Science
- Museum Operations
- Oral History
- Policy History

### PROGRAMS IN FIELDS ALLIED TO PUBLIC HISTORY

- OFFER students a range of specialties including:
- Archival management
  - Area Studies
  - Historic Preservation
  - Historical Archeology
  - Historical Editing
  - History: architectural history, art history, diplomatic history, economic history, family history, public works-environmental history, urban history, and other related history studies.
  - Information and Library Sciences
  - Museum Studies
  - Policy Studies
  - Public Administration
  - Publishing

### PROFESSIONAL DEGREES

- OFFER students career training in various professions. Undergraduate degrees in history are good background and frames of reference for advanced work in these fields. Options include:
- Business
  - Communications (Journalism)
  - Economics
  - Law
  - Public Administration
  - Policy Studies

Whatever your goals, master historical scholarship and clear, cogent English.

You have completed your education.

Do you wish to teach or make a career of education?

## Teaching and Education Careers

**PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION (HISTORY AND SOCIAL STUDIES)**  
INCLUDES public and private elementary and secondary teaching; district and state offices for curriculum and text preparation.

DUTIES: Class instruction, course preparation, organizing historic projects and tours; preparation of classroom materials, including audio-visual and simulations; counseling students; academic supervision and administration.

**HIGHER EDUCATION (HISTORY-RELATED PROGRAMS)**  
INCLUDES public and private institutions from community colleges to universities.

DUTIES: Course instruction and preparation in academic fields of history, public history, or related disciplines as well as interdisciplinary historical writings; consultation on projects in areas of expertise; academic supervision and administration.

**EDUCATION AGENCIES AND FOUNDATIONS**  
INCLUDES local school districts offices, state and federal departments of education, private philanthropic and research foundations and institutions in education.

DUTIES: Analyze long-range trends in various levels of education; make budget and cost estimates; research new directions in teaching and text materials; promote public interest in education.

**ADULT EDUCATION AND CORPORATE TRAINING PROGRAMS**  
INCLUDES full and part-time instruction in higher education institutions, adult and continuing education programs, and special classes offered by business firms, churches, and other organizations.

DUTIES: Class instruction and course preparation ranging from basic historical and civic topics to professional concerns involving historians' techniques and understandings.

## Private Nonprofit Organizations

**HISTORICAL ASSOCIATIONS AND SOCIETIES**  
INCLUDES organizations (usually commissions) at all levels of state and local government which house and administer historical programs for the public; private groups (usually societies) in local communities and states which organize historical activities and resources; scholarly and professional associations serving historian, other professionals, and students.

DUTIES: Manage historical resources and personnel; provide services to the public and to scholars; promote interest in history; edit organizational publication; review historical publications; provide a forum for historical meetings and activities.

**HISTORICAL PROJECTS**  
INCLUDES projects sponsored by universities, historical societies, foundations, government agencies, or other institutions. These projects possess a degree of autonomy or individual purpose, usually having staffs of their own.

DUTIES: May involve the whole range of historical activities, e.g., editing, preservation, research, writing, media presentations. Additional duties include management, budgeting, grants administration.

**MUSEUMS**  
INCLUDE museums of history; historical exhibit projects which collect, preserve, and display photographs, artifacts, and documents.

DUTIES: administration and management; analysis, preservation, display and interpretation of historic material; preparation of interpretive histories; promotion of the use and support of museums by the public; research and production of historical material, including publications, exhibits, films, and audio-visual products; presentations of lectures on history.

**RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS**  
INCLUDES organizations specializing in research requiring the study of subjects over time; private "think tanks"; university-based institutions; public research agencies.

DUTIES: Historical analysis; study of development of policy issues; preparation of analytical reports for contract assignment; computer-based analysis of data; coordination of interdisciplinary studies requiring an historical perspective.

**SERVICE INSTITUTIONS**  
INCLUDES agencies, foundations, and other philanthropic organizations which provide educational, social and cultural services to the public.

DUTIES: Historically based policy analysis of social service issues; formulation of programs which use history as the basis of serving the public; analysis of social need and program proposals.

## Private Individual or Small Firms

**CONSULTING: CULTURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT**  
INCLUDES individual or group contracts with developers, public agencies, business firms; counseling services on preservation and cultural resource management policy.

DUTIES: Research and prepare cultural resource statements for environmental impact reports; identify and evaluate historic structures and other cultural resource; nominate structures for legal protection; preservation education programs.

**CONSULTING: RESEARCH/WRITING**  
INCLUDES contract assignments with clients representing all fields of business, various levels of government and nonprofit concerns; contract counseling and services in various fields of public history.

DUTIES: Preparation of histories; archival and records management services; public and private records search and research; legal and policy research services; oral history interviewing and transcribing; historical editing and indexing.

**GENEALOGICAL SERVICES**  
INCLUDES research and writing of family genealogies, contract assignments in tracing family lines and producing family histories.

DUTIES: genealogy and family history; community history; research writing, editing, publishing; marking and sales of genealogical services.

**PRESERVATION/RESTORATIONS**  
INCLUDES firms offering historic preservation/restoration services; rehabilitation of historically accurate buildings and artifacts; information services on the field.

DUTIES: Architectural, art, and urban history research; application of historical conservation and related artistic, technical, and manual skills; research on preservation laws and tax benefits.

**HISTORY AS AN AVOCATION**  
INCLUDES reading, researching, writing, and interpreting history of all kinds of pleasure; historical reenactment, museum and historical society volunteer work; service on boards of history-related associations; teaching and advising students of history on a voluntary basis.

SKILLS AND ABILITIES to develop appreciation and competence: Ability to think historically; research, writing, and verbal communications skills; deep and abiding appreciation of the field of history.

Note that activities such as marketing and public relations may be performed by independent firms or by departments within a given corporation.

## Public Agencies

**PUBLIC ARCHIVES AND LIBRARIES**  
INCLUDES National archives and Records Service offices and centers; state libraries and archives; municipal archives and record centers; historical rooms of public libraries.

DUTIES: Preservation, arrangement and service of archival and public documents and manuscript collections; planning and selection of archival acquisitions; overall records management and archival policy; promotion of scholarly research in archival records; exhibiting records.

**PLANNING AGENCIES**  
INCLUDES state and local agencies involved in urban planning, environmental and resource control and management, land-use management.

DUTIES: Analysis of urban development and land use as well as policies related to the same; preparation of studies dealing with preservation of historical resources; land use, natural resources, and environmental quality; supervision of public compliance with such legislations.

**MILITARY SERVICE**  
INCLUDES Army (e.g. U.S. Army Center of Military History, Corps of Engineers), Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, and National Guard.

DUTIES: Preparation of institutional histories and policy related studies; direction of historical editing projects; management of archival and records centers; direction of museums and collections of artifacts; lecturing on unit history.

**INTERNATIONAL/MULTINATIONAL AGENCIES**  
INCLUDES a variety of institutions in which the United States participates, with political, social, economic, or cultural goals.

DUTIES: Application of economic, social, political, and financial history to contemporary problems; foreign languages; research and writing in the areas of policy-related history, demographic history, records management; information management.

**HERITAGE/CULTURAL AGENCIES**  
INCLUDES institutions responsible for public programs administering heritage/cultural resources.

DUTIES: Supervision and administration of historic documents, artifacts, structures, and parks; exhibit display; research and publication.

**JUDICIAL BRANCH AND REGULATORY AGENCIES**  
INCLUDES U.S. Supreme Court Curator's Office, historical offices and projects in other levels of federal, state, and local judiciary; clerks and staffs of courts; independent quasi-judicial public regulatory agencies at state and federal level (e.g. Interstate Commerce Commission, state insurance commissions).

DUTIES: Records collection and preservation; research and writing of institutional histories analyzing regulatory and judicial policies; staff work.

**LEGISLATIVE BODIES**  
INCLUDES Congress of the United States, state legislatures; staffs of same; legislative reference and analysis services, historical offices of the U.S. House of Representatives, Senate, and some state legislative.

DUTIES: Provide research assistance to legislators and general public, especially histories of legislation on policy areas or analysis of policy effectiveness; management of institutional records and legislators' papers; publication of bibliographic material; staff and committee investigations; service on study commissions.

**EXECUTIVE BRANCH**  
INCLUDES cabinet-level departments of federal government such as Department of State and Department of the Interior (especially National Park Services); independent executive units within the federal government (e.g. National Endowment for the Humanities, Central Intelligence Agency, Smithsonian Institution); state, regional and local executive departments, agencies, commissions.

DUTIES: Writing institutional and policy history; preparation of current issues studies; analysis of policy performance, of long-range trends; preservation and organization of institutional records; editing of public records and documents; archival and records management; management and interpretation of historic sites and parks.

This chart was prepared by the National Center for the study of History in collaboration with the Historical Association (Great Britain) and Dr. Peter J. Beck. Minor updates by the UW Oshkosh History Department using the American Historical Association careers webpage, 2014.  
SPONSORED BY: American Association of State and Local History • American Historical Association • Association of American Colleges • National Coordinating Committee for the Promotion of History • National Council for Preservation Education • National Council on Public History • North Carolina Institute of Applied History • Oral History Association • Organization of American Historians • Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission • Phi Alpha Theta • Society for History in the Federal Government.